ALBANIA YESTERDAY AND TODAY

712 Albania is also a seat of historic interest having been the battle ground for many wars with the Greeks and the Turks. The national hero of Albania—Scanderbeg the Great—lived in Kruja, where, as a silent testimonial to this great hero's strength, are the remains of the old fortress. It looms directly above the town on a cliff, and the old Tower and lower massive walls still stand. If these old stones could speak, what a story they could tell of the Albanian struggle and strife against the invader! Throughout the country many strategic points are heavily fortified and many watch towers raise their white heads on mountain tops.

574 The Albanians are by far the most hospitable people in Southeastern Europe. Their doors are never closed and a friend cannot ask too much. They are charmingly naive in their manners and delightfully quaint in their customs. There is nothing of the hurried, hysterical existence in Albania; the natives are leisurely and get the full benefit out of their sunny, mellow days. The city man is aware of a pleasant surprise at the lack of the constant blare of the motor horn; the peaceful serenity of the golden days is only broken by the occasional honk of the droschka and the cries of the street vendors.

AN INTIMATE GLIMPSE INTO ALBANIA

ing, accompanied by the women on tambourines and they by the men on violins and cornets. Their dances are picturesque in their native costumes with their hair either flowing or bound up, according to the particular dance. For those who may interpret their dances, there is a rich abundance of narrative in store for the reader. The harmony of tambourine, violin and cornet is not at all unpleasant when played by skilled musicians. The singing, however, is not harmonized, the performers using only one voice. Regardless of where these gypsies may live they earn their living in the same way, and being too lazy to cultivate even a small truck-garden, they lead easy, happy-go-lucky existences, and they have their huts free of rent, provided they work a few days out of the year for their ground landlord, Shevket Bey. Strange as it may seem, these wandering, anchorless people are about the only local blacksmiths found in this country, for the Albanians proper have a curious aversion to this occupation.

After leaving this quaint little town of Bradshesh, and penetrating into the heart of Albania towards Elbasan, large, beautiful

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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incident that occurs during its twelve hours is believed to presage the events of the corresponding months of the coming year, and the events of the first day of each month the character, lucky or unlucky, of the other days generally. It is unlucky to work in the fields during the first week of October, and no corn is sown this month, as the crop would be sure to fail.

The period between the 15th of November and the 6th of January is, like the Greek *Fishoti* and the Bulgarian *Kulada*,[1] supposed to be the carnival time of the Vilas and other supernal beings, who are, at that season, not only more active, but more powerful than at others, and especially during the night. After sunset, consequently, people refrain from going abroad, or drinking water, for fear of mischief, and give no credence to their dreams. They are also careful not to leave any article of wearing apparel out of doors after nightfall, and if, by some oversight, a garment should be so left, it is washed before being used, in order to get rid of any spell cast upon it by the supernals.

Christmas, which bears a name (*Kolendravel*[2]) apparently connected with those by which it is known among the Bulgarians and Vlachs, is observed with ceremonies that recall those of more Northern nations, as well as with some similar to those of their last-mentioned neighbours. On the 24th and 25th of

[1] Vol. i. pp. 123 and 329.

[2] Von Hahn derives this name from the κολλύρα, the ring-shaped cakes made at this season. I would, however, suggest the greater likelihood of the cakes having been named after the name of the feast in its various forms of (Albanian) *Kolendravel*, (Vlach) *Kolindi*, and (Bulgarian) *Kulada*.

[Constitution]

671 No citizens may be exiled or interned within the state
641 except as prescribed by law.

The People's Republic of Albania protects the rights of its citizens in foreign lands.

ARTICLE 20

694 A home cannot be violated.

No person can enter a house and search it against the wishes of the owner, except when he holds a court order in his hands.

No search can be made except in the presence of two witnesses. The owner of the house also has a right to be present.

ARTICLE 21

205 The secrecy of mail and other correspondence cannot be violated except in cases of criminal investigations, military mobilization, or state of war.

ARTICLE 22

461 In the People's Republic of Albania work is a privilege and a duty.

Every citizen has a right to be paid according to his work and to receive from society as much as he gives to it.

ARTICLE 23

647 All citizens have a right to be employed in government work according to specific regulations laid down by law.

Citizens appointed or elected to public office are bound to perform their duties conscientiously.

ARTICLE 24

[729] It is the duty of the state to adequately support disabled
657 soldiers at public expense and to enable them to resume their work. The state shall support the families of those who died in battle and of all war victims.

ARTICLE 25

The state takes care of the health of the people by organizing and controlling health service, hospitals, and sanatoriums.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EG1

would pass over any or all of his own sons in favour of his younger brother or nephew if the latter promised to be a better administrator. Ymer Tullumi of Bujars in Shpat was a case in point. His father made him heir over the heads of his two elder brothers, and in his own old age, being childless, he selected as his successor, not his oldest nephew or the eldest son of his eldest brother, but the most intelligent among his nephews. For the same reason a master whose powers had been dimmed by years or illness generally resigned his position to his successor, although he was legally entitled to remain master as long as he lived.

In his relations with the authorities and the neighbours, the master had to do his best for the family. He tried, for instance, to get the burden of taxation and unpaid labour on government roads lightened, or, better still, shelved altogether; here he might find some degree of literacy useful, though it was otherwise superfluous. To keep on good terms with the neighbours he restrained his subordinates from provocative acts such as stealing or trespassing, and if a quarrel broke out he tried to settle it before it reached the shooting stage, which was always a nuisance to everybody concerned. At home he tried to keep the domestic wheels well oiled, soothing the quarrelsome, reasoning with the disgruntled, never showing anger real or feigned, assigning to each worker, whether man or woman, a daily task. In practice the last point seldom required thinking out, since each man had early specialized as ploughman, shepherd, cow-herd or odd man. If 'hands' were few, the master must work himself; if they were numerous, he confined himself to general supervision and planning of the work of the others. His chief duty was then to see that the fields were properly tilled and the flocks well cared for. In some districts, when temporary labourers had been hired for a special job, the master of a household so big that he did not normally work with his own hands ceased to supervise the workers and joined them as one of themselves. This was regarded as gracious condescension on his part and stimulated the hired men to greater effort.

The master's rule over his household was absolute and extended to every aspect of its life. Unless he first consented, no other man might stay away from work, leave the farm for a day's outing, accept employment elsewhere, or even call in a doctor to attend to his sick child; no boy or girl might be betrothed; no child might be hired out, apprenticed, or sent to school; no woman except his

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGI Albania EGI

annually. In Godolesh the two neighbours did it in alternate years, having exclusive right to the earth with its valuable fertilizing properties for the year when they did the clean up. In Lumë two neighbours cleared the drain together year after year and flung half the earth on one side and half on the other.

In other places one ditch seldom drained two neighbouring fields on the principle that 'you can't walk on my path or use my drain'. In Gurrëzë the man who wanted a drain had to cut it on his own ground with a 'footprint' (20 cm.) of land between the boundary and its edge for the protection of his neighbour's land. Without this buttress the drain might overflow or burst its bank to the detriment of his neighbour. In either contingency its owner had to pay compensation to his neighbour, but prevention of damage was always better for both parties. His neighbour might also accuse him of encroaching on his land, an insulting remark that provoked instant retaliation. If, later on, the neighbour wanted a drain he had to make one for himself, also a 'footprint' away from the boundary. In Lumë and Elbasan there was little risk that open drains would flood, but there too a space had to be left between their edge and the boundary. The avowed purpose of this space was to support the boundary stones. In all cases of single ownership the owner, on clearing the ditch, threw the earth on his own side, where it testified to his ownership if this was ever questioned.

Sometimes a man of Shkrel wanted both a drain and a fence. In that event the ditch was cut along the boundary and a strip of ground of the same width was set aside on the other side of the boundary. All the earth excavated from the ditch was thrown on this strip and so the neighbours became quits, one had a 'hole' on his land and the other a 'hill'. The fence was erected on the 'hill'.

We come now to one of the most important considerations in boundary making. North Albania is one of the wettest regions in Europe, and when the land was waterlogged it inevitably tended to slip downhill. The tropical intensity of many rainstorms increased the mischief. Terracing the fields would have helped to check it, but such manual labour is contrary to the habits and dignity of the north Albanian. His law, however, gave him every possible protection. When there were two fields on a slope, one above the other, they might be separated by a field-path, a road, an irrigation channel or a fence. (The term 'field-path' includes the